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Written on APRIL 3, 2015 at 6:30 AM by SVANDERWERFF

A Message from the Surgeon General: "Be Someone's Hero" — Eliminate Sexual Assault: Know Your Part. Do Your Part.

Filed under COMMUNICATION, COMMUNITY SUPPORT, FAMILIES

(ONE COMMENT)

By Vice Adm. Matthew L. Nathan, Navy surgeon general and chief, U.S. Navy Bureau of Medicine and Surgery



April marks Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month and I take this issue very seriously. That means I have a zero tolerance policy when it comes to sexual assault and I expect the same from everyone – Sailor or Civilian – throughout the entire Navy Medicine enterprise.

Increasing awareness and preventing sexual assault is a priority all year round, but as April begins, I also want to emphasize the important role Navy Medicine plays in preventing these crimes and the care we provide when these incidents occur that can tarnish our Navy, a

career, and lives.

In order to eliminate sexual assault from our service, every Sailor must know, understand and adhere to standards of behavior. When we join the Navy, we join a professional organization and pledge to uphold the core values of honor, courage and commitment. I'm counting on you to live by those tenets. Recognize your role in sexual assault prevention and know when,

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where, and how to intervene. Be an intrusive leader. Is it awkward at times to step in and "stop the fun" when it goes too far? Yes, it can be, but do it! Be someone's hero. Be that Sailor who has the courage and pride to intrude, to protect someone from another or perhaps themselves. Your actions could change the trajectory of someone's life from misery to success.

I am distraught any time I hear of a sexual assault within our ranks. It is inconceivable to me that our shipmates would assault one another or anyone else. These are the same comrades who entrust their lives to one another at sea, on the battlefield and in the workplace. Sexual assault destroys trust, it erodes morale among shipmates, and it degrades our mission readiness and operational effectiveness. The bottom line is sexual assault is a crime and will not be tolerated.

This year's theme for Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month is "Eliminate Sexual Assault: Know Your Part. Do Your Part."

Sexual assault prevention requires each of us to actively participate and stay engaged in the lives of our shipmates and colleagues. You are leaders at every level. If you see a shipmate who is harassing someone or being harassed, exert your leadership, demonstrate the Navy's core values and take action – in other words, **do your part**. We must take care of one another because the safety, dignity, and well-being of our Sailors and Marines is a responsibility we all share.

Navy Medicine directly supports sexual assault awareness and prevention programs, not only through our training and education efforts, but also by ensuring the availability of care for those who have been victimized. We have proficient, confident and caring Sexual Assault Forensic Examination (SAFE) providers ready to perform 24 hours a day, seven days a week to meet the immediate and long-term medical needs of sexual assault victims. SAFE providers – including sexual assault nurse examiners, physicians, physician assistants, advanced practice nurse practitioners and independent duty corpsmen – are trained and available to ensure timely and appropriate medical care for sexual assault victims in all military platforms served by Navy Medicine. We currently have more than 875 SAFE-trained providers serving aboard ships, alongside Marines, and in our military treatment facilities.

I expect everyone at every level, regardless of your rank, role or position, in Navy Medicine to be engaged. Together, by knowing our part and doing our part, we can eliminate sexual assault from our Navy.

Thank you for your service and the work you do every day. It is my honor to serve as your surgeon general.

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Uniformity not double standard

Sexual assault is abuse! Abuse isn't just physical, it is verbal too! Unwanted attention of any kind is harassment which literally is another form of violence and bullying. To take sexual assault seriously, we must be willing to view it for what it is as directed towards both men and women.

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